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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 64/26, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 46/30 and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990 (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-fifth session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 19 February 2010, a note verbale was sent to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 64/26 and seeking their views on the matter. Replies, which have been received from Australia, Cuba, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Spain (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Qatar, are reproduced in section III below. Additional replies received from Governments will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Observations

3. The Secretary-General notes that the issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East remains of considerable importance and has received increased attention at the recently concluded 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Final Document adopted by the Conference contains, inter alia, practical steps for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The agreed practical steps are as follows:

(a) The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, will convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. The 2012 Conference shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution on the Middle East;

(b) Appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, of a facilitator, with a mandate to support implementation of the 1995 resolution by conducting consultations with the States of the region in that regard and undertaking preparations for the convening of the 2012 Conference. The Facilitator will also assist in the implementation of follow-on steps agreed by the participating regional States at the 2012 conference. The Facilitator will report to the 2015 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee;

(c) Designation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, of a host Government for the 2012 Conference;

(d) Additional steps aimed at supporting the implementation of the resolution, including that the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and other relevant international organizations be requested to prepare background documentation for the 2012 Conference regarding modalities for a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, taking into account work previously undertaken and experience gained;

(e) Consideration of all offers aimed at supporting the implementation of the resolution, including the offer of the European Union to host a follow-on seminar to that organized in June 2008;

in addition to the practical measures, the Conference also decided as follows:

(f) The Conference reaffirms that all States parties to the Treaty, particularly the nuclear-weapon States and the States in the region, should continue to report on steps taken to implement the resolution, through the United Nations Secretariat, to the President of the 2015 Review Conference, as well as to the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee meetings to be held in advance of that Conference.

4. In accordance with the relevant practical steps, the Secretary-General reiterates his readiness to undertake the necessary actions with the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution and in consultation with the States of the region.

5. The Secretary-General reaffirms the urgent need for a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He welcomes the efforts of the United States of America to facilitate political progress between Israelis and Palestinians. In particular, he reiterates his support for the proximity talks that have begun under the auspices of Special Envoy George Mitchell. He is of the view that these talks should continue in spite of recent disturbing developments on the ground and he hopes that they will lead to direct negotiations on all core issues with a view to a final resolution of the conflict. He will continue to work towards this end with the Quartet, which on 11 May 2010 welcomed the first round of the proximity talks, noting that they constituted a significant step towards direct, bilateral negotiations and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours. The Secretary-General emphasizes the importance for any peace settlement to be comprehensive, and stresses that the Arab Peace Initiative is an essential building block in this regard. He calls for the implementation of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), including the sustained reopening of crossing points into Gaza and intra-Palestinian reconciliation. He calls upon all concerned parties within and outside the region to adopt a constructive attitude with a view to creating stable security conditions and an eventual settlement that would facilitate the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Secretary-General reiterates the continued readiness of the United Nations to provide any assistance deemed helpful in that regard.

III. Replies received from Governments

Australia

[Original: English]
[22 June 2010]

Australia continues to support the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, freely arrived at by regional States. The Australian Government welcomed the outcome of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference on the 1995 Middle East resolution, and will support constructive efforts to progress the implementation of a Middle East weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[14 May 2010]

Along with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Cuba has repeatedly voiced great concern about the continuing existence of nuclear weapons — estimated to number 23,300 in the world, of which over 12,000 are in a state of operational readiness — the persistence of defence and security doctrines that include the use of such weapons and, as a result, the huge amounts spent on developing new types of nuclear weapons.

This poses a serious threat to mankind, and we therefore consider nuclear disarmament to be the top disarmament priority.

Cuba believes that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world is an important step towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first such zone, paved the way for other regions in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

In the view of Cuba, such zones should be based on freely negotiated agreements between the States of the region concerned and should include arrangements for cooperation between the States parties and signatories in the various zones.

The First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in 2005 in Tlatelolco, Mexico, and the Second Conference, held in New York on 30 April 2010, were a great incentive for States parties in such zones to promote methods of cooperation between themselves, between the organs established under each of the relevant treaties and with other interested States.

In the Middle East, the overwhelming majority of the States of the region are calling, in vain, for it to be made into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, although many resolutions and decisions have been adopted in the General Assembly and Security Council and in the International Atomic Energy Agency.

No serious effort has been made to implement the resolutions adopted on this subject, including Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of

Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the decision on this matter adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other resolutions adopted in the United Nations General Assembly and in the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In order for this to happen, Israel — the only country in the region that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has not expressed its intention to do so — must accede to the Treaty without delay and submit its nuclear installations to the IAEA expanded safeguards. In addition to allowing the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, this would make an important contribution to the attainment of the goal of nuclear disarmament and would be a huge step in the peace process in that region.

Until such time as Israel accedes to the NPT, Cuba urges the Governments concerned immediately to halt the transfer to that country of any type of nuclear equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices, as well as scientific and technological assistance in the nuclear sphere.

The statements made by the Israeli Prime Minister on 12 December 2006 in which he admitted that Israel is a nuclear-weapon State are a source of great concern. The acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel represents a threat to the security of the neighbouring States and to peace in the region, which is already very disturbed.

In the context of the current serious situation in the Middle East, Cuba reaffirms the ongoing responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council, for peace and security in this region, including the solution of the question of Palestine.

Japan

[Original: English]
[14 June 2010]

Japan supports establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned and on the condition that the establishment of such zones would contribute to regional and global stability and security.

Lack of progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious concern. Japan supported, and continues to fully support, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems. Japan believes that progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East will further strengthen the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Following the previous sessions, Japan again joined, at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the adoption by consensus of resolution 64/26 of 2 December 2009, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". Japan welcomes the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, adopted on 28 May 2010, which endorsed practical steps for full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including convening of a conference on the establishment of the

Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction in 2012. In order to ensure steady implementation of these steps, active and constructive contributions by all States of the region are indispensable.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will ultimately require the adherence by all States in the region to NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by all States in the region would also be a substantial and practical step to this end. Japan has been actively taking part in the international efforts to encourage the universal adherence to these multilateral instruments on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. As part of such endeavours, Japan supported the adoption of the resolution (GC(53)/res/16) entitled "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East" at the fifty-third regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), held from 14 to 18 September 2009. Furthermore, Japan on various occasions urged Israel to become a party to NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible. Japan has also urged other Middle Eastern States to join at the earliest date the relevant weapons of mass destruction-related treaties to which they are not parties in order to foster an environment conducive to the creation of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the region.

It is imperative that compliance with those legal instruments should be fully assured. Japan has urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with the requirements of all the relevant resolutions of IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council in respect of its nuclear programme, including the suspension of all enrichment-related activities and the ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocol. In this context, Japan also stresses the necessity of strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, which plays a vital role in underpinning NPT. Japan is strongly of the view that the conclusion of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols by all States in the region is essential for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Japan, with the aim of achieving universal adherence to the comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, is ready to share its expertise and to provide technical assistance to interested States in the region.

Japan is firmly committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, considering that it is a key for regional stability, which is a vital factor in establishing a foundation for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Based on the recognition that the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East is through the realization of peaceful coexistence between Israel and a future Palestinian state, Japan has been making utmost efforts to that end. In particular, Japan has been promoting the following measures:

(a) Japan maintains high-level political dialogues with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority in order to encourage them to advance the peace process. For instance, Ambassador Yutaka Iimura, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for the Middle East, visited Israel and the Palestinian territories in August 2009 and January 2010 to work with high-level officials of the relevant parties and encourage them to play a responsible role in enhancing the Middle East peace process based on the two-state solution. In addition, President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian

Authority and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman of Israel visited Japan, at the invitation of the Government, in February and May 2010, respectively. Their Excellencies held meetings with the then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and discussed various issues, including their bilateral relationship and the Middle East peace process;

(b) Japan has been actively involved in assisting the Palestinians since the Oslo Accords of 1993. As of May 2010, Japan has disbursed more than 1 billion United States dollars in assistance to the Palestinians. In December 2009, the Government of Japan decided to extend non-project grant aid of 1.5 billion Japanese yen to the Palestinian Authority, with the aim of promoting economic and social development efforts by the Palestinian Authority, and an environmental programme grant to introduce to the West Bank a solar photovoltaic power plant, the first such facility that is totally independent of the Israeli economy. With regard to assistance to the Gaza Strip, in March 2010, Japan approved the implementation of the reprogrammed project on the clearance of unexploded ordnances, rubble removal and immediate support for improvement of solid waste service management in the Gaza Strip, through the United Nations Development Programme;

(c) The Government of Japan has been actively initiating and sponsoring various projects that will contribute to confidence-building between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In addition, Japan, based on its efforts mentioned above, is promoting the "Corridor for peace and prosperity" initiative through a regional cooperative effort among Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Japan, as its mid- and long-term effort to generate hope and trust among the peoples in the region for future coexistence and coprosperity between Israel and a Palestinian state. The initiative requires regional cooperation. Japan, the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Jordan established the Four-Party Consultation Unit, which has held several ministerial and technical-level meetings since March 2007. As a result of the fifth technical-level meeting held in March 2010, the four parties reaffirmed their strong commitment to the initiative and confirmed that they would continue to exert their utmost efforts to establish a Jericho Agro-Industrial Park by the end of 2012.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

[Original: Arabic]
[24 March 2010]

- The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya shares the preoccupation of the Arab States with regard to the need to implement the resolution concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East that was adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That resolution was part of a package whereby it was agreed to indefinitely extend the Treaty. Any further delay in implementing the resolution will rob the Treaty of its credibility and, consequently, have a negative impact on non-proliferation.

- No connection should be made between implementation of the above-mentioned resolution and progress in the negotiations over the Palestinian question that are taking place in the region between Israel and other parties, which do not concern all the States of the region.

- Pressure must be brought to bear on Israel to become a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by specifically naming it in the report, as was done in Security Council resolution 487 (1981): there can be no peace or security in the Middle East while Israel possesses nuclear weapons and remains the only State in the region that has not adhered to the Treaty.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must follow up the resolution (GC(53)/RES/17) that it adopted in September 2009, entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities" and submit regular reports on its implementation to the IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference.
- An international conference should be held on the issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, at which an appropriate mechanism for achieving that aim should be devised.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[21 June 2010]

As it has done in the past, Mexico supports efforts to create new nuclear-weapon-free zones, as a promoter of and party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco concluded in 1967, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a heavily populated area. In this connection, Mexico is committed to using exclusively for peaceful purposes the nuclear material and facilities under its jurisdiction and to prohibiting and preventing the possession, testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition by any means whatsoever of nuclear weapons.

Mexico considers that, although militarily denuclearized zones are not an end in themselves, they are a means of progressing towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

In this context, the existence and/or threat of a nuclear arsenal in the countries of the Middle East is one of the central problems of relations between the States of the region, so that the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would help to diminish tension in the zone and to create a climate of peace and security in this disturbed region.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control have been the pillars of Mexico's foreign policy. In this connection, Mexico has supported universal acceptance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, designed to prevent a nuclear war resulting from the proliferation of weapons of this type. Accordingly, Mexico advocates nuclear non-proliferation and urges those States which have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty. In addition, as a confidence-building measure among the parties, nuclear-weapon States should submit their facilities to the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is the principal intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Spain (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union)

[Original: English]
[28 June 2010]

The European Union has a long-standing position of providing support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. At the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, and Mongolia, held in New York on 30 April 2010, the representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, indicated that the European Union had expressed on many occasions that it attaches great importance to the development and strengthening, wherever possible, of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, based on arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, as elaborated in the guidelines adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1999. Nuclear-weapon-free zones enhance regional and global peace and security and are a means of promoting disarmament, stability and confidence.

The European Union recognizes the continuing importance of the existing legally binding security assurances, provided for by the protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and the unilateral declarations of nuclear-weapon States, as noted by the Security Council in resolution 984 (1995) and reaffirmed at the 2000 Review Conference, to non-nuclear weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the use of or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Positive and negative security assurances can act as incentives for other States to abstain from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Also, on numerous occasions, the European Union has affirmed its firm commitment to the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The European Union has called upon all States in the region to make progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking measures that would preclude the achievement of this objective. Furthermore, in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, the European Union and its Mediterranean partners agreed to pursue an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. In June 2008, the joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean confirmed the European Union's readiness to consider and work out practical steps to prepare the ground for the full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East. We have acknowledged the importance of reaching agreement on concrete practical steps as part of a process, involving all States of the region, aimed at facilitating the implementation of the 1995 resolution.

The European Union has also actively promoted and participated in seminars and workshops convened to consider the issue of the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. In June 2008, the European Union convened a seminar on Middle East security and weapons-of-mass-destruction non-proliferation and disarmament, which brought together more than 100 experts from States of the region and States members of the European Union to discuss openly the prospects and challenges for the establishment of a zone free of

weapons-of-mass-destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East region. Several member States have also organized seminars and workshops to consider these issues.

The European Union had indicated in 2009, during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference, its readiness and determination to convene a further seminar as a follow-up to the discussions held at the June 2008 seminar and has been in contact with several countries concerned in order to consider the best modalities for the organization of this event.

The European Union is fully aware of the challenges to proliferation affecting the Middle East region and the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The European Union has always urged States not party to NPT to become parties, as non-nuclear-weapon States. The European Union has also always promoted universality not only of nuclear, but also of chemical and biological non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements and instruments, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Furthermore, the European Union has urged States that are party to NPT to comply fully with all of its provisions and with all relevant Security Council and IAEA resolutions.

The proliferation risks presented in particular by the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to be a matter of grave concern to the European Union and to the international community. The European Union recognizes that the Islamic Republic of Iran, like any other State party to NPT, has the inalienable right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, but the international community has to be sure that the Islamic Republic of Iran complies with its obligations under NPT and its safeguards agreement. If the Islamic Republic of Iran were to acquire a military nuclear capability, this would constitute an unacceptable threat to regional and international security. Moreover, a failure to find a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue could jeopardize the key objectives being pursued within the NPT framework, in particular the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty forms an essential part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and with a view to its entry into force as soon as possible, the European Union has shown a strong commitment towards the universal ratification of that Treaty, particularly by the nine remaining States listed in annex II to the Treaty which have not yet done so, including those in the Middle East region.

The European Union is firmly determined to combat the threat of nuclear terrorism and supports all measures, in particular Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is designed to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction or connected materials. We have called on all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify and implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

The European Union is of the view that such actions would represent a crucial contribution to an overall improvement of the security situation and confidence in

the Middle East region and has emphasized the importance of the peace process in the Middle East in promoting mutual confidence and security in the region.

The European Union has strongly supported the consideration of practical steps at the 2010 Review Conference to prepare the ground for a full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East. In the decision adopted by the Council of the European Union (Council decision 2010/212/CFSP, of 29 March 2010), it was decided that, at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Union should work in particular to ensure that the States parties to NPT address several priorities, including strengthening its implementation through the adoption of a set of concrete, effective, pragmatic and consensual measures for stepping up international efforts against proliferation, pursuing disarmament, ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and making progress in regard to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

In the same Council decision, the European Union called upon all States in the region to make progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking measures that preclude the achievement of this objective, while acknowledging the importance of reaching agreement on concrete practical steps as part of a process, involving all States of the region, aimed at facilitating the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The Council decision also called upon all States parties to NPT, in particular the nuclear-weapon States parties, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts towards the establishment by regional parties of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in keeping with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

In the statement issued by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton, on 28 May 2010, she warmly welcomed the consensus reached by the NPT Review Conference on the final document containing a future-oriented action plan, including the agreement on a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. She referred in particular to the endorsement of a number of practical steps, including a conference, to be convened in 2012, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The 2012 Conference, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. These practical steps also incorporated the consideration of all offers aimed at supporting the implementation of the 1995 resolution, including the offer of the European Union to host a seminar to follow on from that organized in June 2008.

In her statement, the European Union High Representative concluded by indicating that the European Union and its member States intend to start promptly the implementation of the measures of the action plan for the three pillars and that, in addition, the European Union would immediately engage in the preparation of its contribution to the process for the implementation of the Middle East resolution.

Qatar

[Original: English]
[5 April 2010]

In the wake of the October 1973 war, which had a nuclear dimension, Arab countries strove to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-free zone. At its sixty-second session, the Council of the League of Arab States issued a resolution making the Middle East a nuclear-free zone. This was the basis of the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly by Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran in September 1974, which was adopted on 9 December 1974 as General Assembly resolution 3263 (XXIX). This resolution continued to be adopted on an annual basis up until 2008.

Among the obstacles to the implementation of this General Assembly resolution is the fact that Israel stresses that disarmament and the establishment of a nuclear-free zone are contingent on the establishment of comprehensive peace and security in the region, whereas the other countries of the Middle East are of the view that the two tracks have to proceed in parallel.

Qatar aligns itself with the Arab position, namely, that the establishment of this nuclear-free zone serves international peace and security and that its establishment should not be contingent on the establishment of peace, since both tracks are not mutually exclusive. Likewise, Qatar is of the view that consideration should be given to the establishment of a mechanism conducive to the creation of the nuclear-free zone, under the supervision of a special committee and according to a timetable for implementation.